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AN EXHORTATION TO PEACE, LOYALTY, and the SUPPORT of GOVERNMENT.

ADDRESSED TO A

Congregation of Proteſtant Diſſenters,

In ABINGDON BERKS,

At the CLOSE of a SERMON

Preached in the Morning of the LORD'S DAY,

DECEMBER 9, 1792.

Publiſhed at the urgent Requeſt of thoſe who heard it, and as a Teſtimony of their entire Approbation of the Sentiments inculcated in it.

By DANIEL TURNER, M.A.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Exhortation is to be underſtood as expreſſive of the Sentiments of the other Diſſenters in Abingdon, as well as thoſe of the Congregation to whom it was more immediately addreſſed; and is now publiſhed as a ſhort Vindication of the Principles and Conduct of the Diſſenters in general from the falſe Charges lately brought againſt them by their ignorant and malevolent Adverſaries, in many ſeditious and inflammatory Pamphlets, Sermons, and other Papers, which, under the ſpecious *Pretence* of ſupporting kingly Government, are, in *reality*, no better than *ſcandalous Libels* againſt its Wiſdom and Moderation.—The moſt effectual Means of anſwering that deſirable End muſt be to perſuade our Fellow-ſubjects to forget all their little Differences, and unite in one Body againſt the common Diſturbers of the Public Peace.

The Reader who is desirous of seeing more on the Subject here before him, may peruse, amongst many other excellent Publications upon it, the following, viz.

1. A VINDICATION *of the Modern Dissenters*, against the Aspersions of the Reverend *W. Hawkins*, M. A. in his Bampton Lecture Sermon; and of the RIGHT REVEREND Author of a Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters, in Reference to the Corporation and Test Acts: *by the Reverend S. Palmer*, of Hackney.

2. A SERMON on the *Principles of the Dissenters*, preached at *Fairford*, Gloucestershire, by the Reverend *J. Townsend*.

3. A VINDICATION of the *Dissenters at Oxford*, in Reply to a Sermon by the Reverend *Dr. Tatham*, by the Reverend *J. Hinton*.

4. A Defence of *Dr. Price* and the *Modern Reformers*, by the Reverend *C. Wyvill*, an eminent Clergyman of the Established Church.

AN

EXHORTATION TO PEACE, &c.

A Day of Viſitation from Almighty GOD, ſuch as the Prophet points out in our Text*, ſeems to be coming upon this Country. Our national Sins are very great and aggravated, and cry aloud for Vengeance; and the great BEING, to whom it belongs, appears diſpoſed to hearken to their Cry, and enter into Judgment with us: It becomes us to be ſeriouſly attentive to theſe Things, leſt the Day come upon us ere we are aware, and totally unprepared to meet it. There is certainly ſpreading amongſt us a factious, diſcontented, turbulent Spirit.

* Iſaiah x. 3.

Spirit. Some raving with the moſt furious Zeal in Favour of deſpotic Power and Dominion; inſiſting upon our abſolute Submiſſion to their Dictates, right or wrong, without leaving us even the Right of complaining:—Others are as mad in the Purſuit of what they call by the ſacred Name of LIBERTY; but which, in Fact, is no better than *Licentiouſneſs*, putting it in the Power of every Man, however wicked, to do juſt what he pleaſes, without any Controul from the Laws and Order of Society. Between theſe ſhocking Extremes there is certainly a Medium, which we ſhould endeavour to underſtand and keep.

Many Years happy Experience may convince us, that the Conſtitution of the Government of this Country, as it conſiſts of KING, LORDS, and COMMONS, is eminently calculated to ſecure to us the ineſtimable Bleſſings of Civil and Religious Liberty, and every Kind of National Proſperity, and therefore worthy of our ſtrenuous Support.

We muſt acknowledge, indeed, that even this happy Conſtitution has been ſhamefully corrupted and abuſed, in many Inſtances, by wicked and deſigning

ſigning Men, to ſerve their ſelfiſh and pernicious Ends:—Nor is it poſſible, in the preſent depraved State of Human Nature, to form a Syſtem of Government that would not be liable to Abuſe from ſuch Men; but none of the Evils that have hitherto prevailed in ours, can poſſibly juſtify any ſeditious Attempts to overturn the Conſtitution itſelf. We *may*, and we *ought*, to ſeek the Redreſs of our Grievances, and endeavour to ſtem the Torrent of Corruption, by all fair and peaceable Means, ſuch as the Conſtitution itſelf furniſhes us with in great Plenty; and to perſevere with a manly Firmneſs and Reſolution, till the End be obtained, in ſome tolerable Degree at leaſt; but, at the ſame Time, ſhould be exceedingly careful to avoid all violent and hoſtile Meaſures, leſt we find the Remedy worſe than the Diſeaſe.

The Pretenders to ſuperior Wiſdom in Politics, may paint out to our Imagination, Schemes of Government that may look very pretty, and even charming, in *Theory*, but cannot, in the preſent State of Things amongſt us, be reduced to *Practice*, without the Miſeries of Anarchy and Confuſion.

I would, therefore, my Friends, take this Opportunity

tunity to recommend to you all, and particularly to you who are *Diſſenters*, to beware of being led away from your genuine Spirit and Principles of Peace, by the wild, undigeſted Notions about *Liberty* and *Equality*, which ſome are ſo fond of propagating. They do not conſider, that however ſuch Notions may ſuit the political Humour and State of other Countries, they are not at all applicable to ours; nor adapted to the Genius and Spirit of BRITONS.

As Proteſtant *Diſſenters* we are, upon Principle, ſincere and warm FRIENDS to both Civil and Religious Liberty; yet, as *Chriſtians*, utter ENEMIES to all licentious Violence againſt the Government. Though obliged, by our Conſciences, to *diſſent* from the Eſtabliſhed Church, yet ſincere Friends to her Peace and Proſperity, not even *wiſhing* to deprive her Members of the Enjoyment of the ſame Liberty of Conſcience we claim for ourſelves. Accordingly, the Diſſenters have been always ready to join them in Support of the Church, when in Danger from our common Enemies the Papiſts; and this even at the Expence of giving up many of their own particular Rights and Privileges; witneſs

witneſs their Conduct at the Revolution in 1688. —No Men rejoiced more cordially in that glorious Event than they ;—no Men more zealouſly attached to the Illuſtrious Houſe of *Hanover*, from its firſt Acceſſion to the Throne of theſe Kingdoms to the preſent Day, than they ;—no Men ſet their Faces more reſolutely againſt the rebellious Efforts of its Enemies in the Years 15 and 45, or exerted themſelves with more Liberality and Spirit in Favour of the reigning Family. Theſe are notorious Facts, which I challenge even their moſt inveterate Enemies to refute.

There may poſſibly be here and there a few, amongſt our many *Thouſands*, miſled by the wild Doctrines lately ſtarted, or provoked by the illiberal Spirit of their Adverſaries, who may think and act differently ; but no whole Bodies of Men can be juſtly chargeable with the wrong Sentiments and Conduct of every Individual among them. In fact, the chief Leaders of the Malecontents with us are *deiſtical* Philoſophers, neither Churchmen nor Diſſenters, Men of no *Religion* at all. In general, and as a Body, the Diſſenters, ever ſince the Revolution, have been as ſtaunch Loyaliſts as any of the Mem-

bers

bers of the Eſtabliſhed Church, though not poſſeſſed of their Advantages and Encouragements.

This loyal and peaceable Spirit, and firm Attachment to the Conſtitution, I wiſh you to maintain, remembering that you are the profeſſed Diſciples of the Prince of Peace, and moſt benevolent Friend of Mankind; and that, therefore, it muſt be utterly inconſiſtent with your Characters, to be concerned in any popular Inſurrections, or ſeditious Cabals againſt a Government, in its conſtituent Principles, ſo favourable to all our juſt Rights and Liberties, and under the Protection of which we have enjoyed, for ſo many Years, ſuch an ample Share of national Happineſs;—this would be the baſeſt Ingratitude to God and *Man*. Inſtead of this, let us endeavour to poſſeſs our Souls with Patience under any of the little Inconveniences we may happen to feel from it; ſtudy the Things that make for Peace, and follow it with all Men. Bleſs them that curſe us, and pray for them who deſpitefully uſe us; or, in a Word, take the Apoſtle *Peter's* Advice who was a wiſe and good Man [1 Peter ii. 14—17.] where he exhorts us by proper "Submiſſion to Government "to put to Silence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men;—

"as

" as free, yet not uſing our Liberty for a Cloak of " Maliciouſneſs, but as the Servants of God ;— " honour all Men, love the Brotherhood ; fear God ; " and honour the King."

To conclude, if you wiſh to diſtinguiſh yourſelves as the real Friends of your Country, walk more cloſely with your God in all the Duties of evangelical Piety ; avoid all ſinful Conformity to the World ; nor any Way countenance its Vices and Follies ; ſet always before you the illuſtrious Example of the Lord Jesus Christ for your Imitation : —Be more conſtant and fervent in Prayer to God, for a Spirit of Repentance and Reformation ;—pay a tender Regard to the juſt Rights and Privileges of the meaneſt amongſt you ; kindly relieve, to the utmoſt of your Power, the Diſtreſſes of the honeſt and induſtrious Poor ; inſtructing the ignorant, reclaiming the vicious, and doing good to all. By theſe Means you will not only find much Comfort and Support in any Day of afflicting Viſitation that may come upon you ; but will do your Country infinitely more effectual Service than by any noiſy Outcries about Liberty, or tumultuous Endeavours

to reform the State.—You will, I truſt, take theſe Hints well, as they proceed not from any Suſpicion I have of your Want of *Loyalty*, but purely with the Hope of confirming you in it, and of exciting you to ſome proper Exertions, at this very critical Juncture, in Support of Government, and the Peace and Welfare of your Country.

THE END.

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Prove all Things—hold faſt that which is good.

PAUL.